



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 19, 2023

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF AVIATION INTRODUCES ORDINANCE TO
STABILIZE CONCESSIONS OPERATORS AT CHICAGO'S AIRPORTS**

Ordinance provides for amended agreements with small businesses providing services to passengers at O'Hare, Midway

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) today introduced an ordinance that would permit the CDA to continue to provide relief to concessions operators at O'Hare and Midway International Airports.

"As the travel and tourism industry continues its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, one segment that continues to lag behind is airport concessionaires, many of whom are local, small business owners that were nearly wiped out by the sudden fall-off in passenger traffic," said Mayor Lightfoot. "This ordinance enhances the CDA's ability to amend agreements already approved by City Council on limited terms in an effort to make Chicago's concession partners whole."

"Thanks to our hard-working team at CDA and our engaged partners on City Council, Chicago is honored and privileged to have some of the highest Airport Concessions Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE) participation rates in America, reaching 38% at O'Hare, and the highest reported rate in the nation at Midway, at 55%," said CDA Commissioner Jamie L. Rhee. "Through no fault of their own, many of these businesses were unable to acquire the financing, materials, and staffing necessary to open in a timely manner under business terms negotiated prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This ordinance provides the CDA the flexibility to re-establish those terms, and to ensure operational needs continue to be met."

The ordinance would permit the CDA to amend existing agreements with concessionaires to allow for the revision of development timelines that were set prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the alteration of ownership limitations agreed to prior to the pandemic, and the extensions of existing agreements not to exceed five years. City Council approved similar authority as part of a comprehensive relief package in 2020.



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



“The extension of the terms for concessions, coupled with the rebounding passenger levels, will enable ACDBEs and smaller businesses to get the funds necessary to maintain their operations, or in the case of those who postponed development of their operation, begin to outfit their space and commence operations,” said Chairman Matt O’Shea of the City Council Committee on Aviation. “Many concessionaires put off necessary capital improvements during the pandemic, and because their businesses weren’t yet operational, they were ineligible for federal COVID relief programs. They are now anxious to fund improvements to their operations, and to develop revised terms with the CDA that will allow them to proceed.”

All concessions relief authorized through this ordinance would require the approval of the City’s Corporation Counsel and Chief Financial Officer, and the CDA would provide notice of any changes under this ordinance to the Committee on Aviation within 30 days.

About the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA)

The Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) is self-supporting, using no local or state tax dollars for operations or capital improvements at O’Hare and Midway International Airports. Chicago’s airports offer service to over 260 nonstop destinations worldwide, including 47 foreign countries, combined. Together, Chicago’s airports serve more than 105 million passengers each year and generate approximately \$70B in annual economic activity for the region. Please visit www.flychicago.com to learn more about the Chicago Department of Aviation.

###